Your Goals in Your Hand

Feature   By Pete Scisco

Athletes set goals to enhance their performance. Project managers set goals to bring products to market. If you want to get ahead in life, at work, or in your personal relationships, you need goals to keep your development moving forward.

The best goals, the ones that are meaningful and effective (and therefore worth working toward) are simple, can be measured, are attainable and realistic, and have some connection with your personal values. And some of the best tools for reaching a goal, aside from determination and the support of friends and colleagues and family, can be found in the form of software running on Palm OS devices.

Although its feature-rich set doesn't suit everyone, Life Balance (version 2.6.1 sells for $39.95) from Llamagraphics sits at or near the top of goal-setting programs designed for the Palm OS. Using its own calculations, the program helps you to balance your work and life and set priorities based on the ideals you value most. To get to those calculations you tell the program you list the main goals for different aspects of your life, and then set the tasks you need to accomplish to reach those goals. This approach helps you be extremely specific, which keeps your path simple, and it means the goals are realistic and attainable because you have created all the steps you need to reach a successful conclusion. The program requires 350K or memory and Palm OS 3.0 or later.
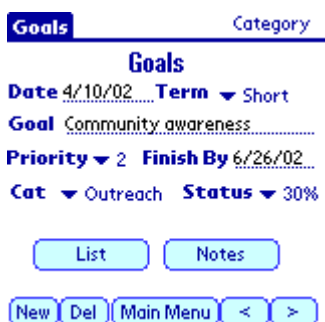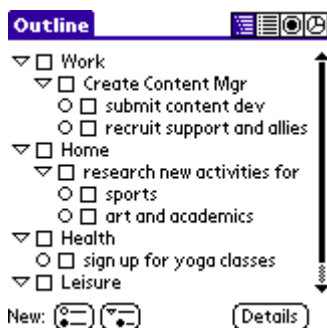
Simpler in concept, GoalKeeper 2.6 ($15 from HandeKeeper Enterprises) starts with your mission statement and then asks for you to list your values, the roles and relationships that are most important to you (and to your reaching your goals), the goals you have set for yourself, and the tasks you need to accomplish to achieve those goals. Added to this ladder approach to goal setting is room for recording ideas, tools for evaluating your progress, and a place for notes. The program requires 125K of RAM. This program is a good compromise but has one misstep. It says that if you have trouble defining your mission you can define goals first and then create a mission statement from your goals. This is a reversal of the best goal setting practices defined by extensive psychological research.

Westware's Goal Master 2.9 (shareware; $10) is a very similar program. Divided among eight sections, this goal setting program provides space for defining your mission, setting goals and tasks with dates and completion information (what percentage of the total goal has been achieved), and a place for your notes and for evaluating your progress. Insofar as it gets you to think about your goals as related to your values and your mission, this program is a good way to think through goals that are meaningful and attainable. But there is precious little guidance for using the program. The low cost is fine if all you want it a reference guide to the goals you have created for your work and life. It uses 131K of memory and requires Palm OS 3.0 or later.

FocusOnSuccess 4.1 (shareware; $10) takes a slightly different approach. Rather than specifically targeting goals, this program encourages you to think through your ideas, gather information on them, and then evaluate the pros and cons. You can list challenges associated with bringing your ideas to fruition, record related information that help you gain a perspective on your idea.

Setting goals is the best way for you to develop yourself and to have the kind of life that is meaningful and without regret. Using your Palm Powered handheld to stay on track is a good way to keep your eye on the prize.

News

Palm Apps Remain Popular

NPDTechworld, a New York-based market research firm, reported last week that Palm OS applications accounted for more than 97 percent of handheld software titles sold in the United States last year. In the retail channel the group reported a tripling of handheld software sales, from 225,000 in 2000 to 900,000 in 2001. Games were the biggest category, with Bejeweled near the top of the list. On the productivity side, Documents to Go and Wordsmith, and QuickOffice led the way in customer popularity.

New Products

JetKeys 0.2

It seems like every month brings another approach to text input on Palm OS devices. This replacement for Graffiti follows the examples of similar programs that offer an alternative to the Pam's onscreen QWERTY keyboard layout. Frequently used letters are grouped in patterns around a central point. Tap letters or drag your stylus around the layout to enter text. and you built-in keyboard writing system Needs 100KB of RAM and Palm OS 3.0 or later. Download the free beta.

Yoga 1.3

Keyboard alternatives may help you stretch your fingers, but for stretching the rest of your body a program like this one is invaluable. This yoga guide illustrates and describes about 50 different yoga positions that you can mix to create a satisfying routine. You can add your own notes, which are automatically sent to Memo Pad for synching to your desktop computer. Requires Palm OS 3.5. Shareware; costs $4.99. Download demo.

Callisto 3.0

If you're struggling with an addiction to Bejeweled you may not want this habit-forming arcade game anywhere near your Palm OS handheld. Arrange the wiggling spheres, rocks, or planets (shape is up to you) so that you get a series of one color together and the shapes disappear, you get points, and new shapes appear. Play against the clock, against an AI, or against a friend in an IR match. Needs 205KB of memory and Palm OS 3.0. Shareware; 14.95. Download demo.